



## Maize, Dairy, Soil Fertility & Nutribusiness Program

### What is the Maize, Dairy, Soil Fertility & Nutribusiness Program?

The Maize, Dairy, Soil & Nutribusiness Program is a direct investment in the Government of Kenya through funding to the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI). Under this project, KARI is charged with conducting and disseminating agricultural research to strengthen food security and improve nutrition in Kenya. KARI is a semi-autonomous government institution that administers more than 20 research centers throughout Kenya. The program is part of the U.S. Government's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative known as Feed the Future.

KARI is researching and distributing seed varieties that can resist drought, disease and pests; is developing and disseminating important information for livestock farmers and herders about best practices in animal health; and promoting the cultivation of African leafy vegetables and legumes such as cow peas, pumpkins and various night shades in particularly food insecure areas.



Photo: USAID/Kenya

*Improving food security through the development of drought and pest resistant crop varieties is one key component of the program*

### Project Duration and Budget

July 2009-December 2012

\$1.8 million

### Who implements the Maize, Dairy, Soil Fertility & Nutribusiness program?

Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI)

[www.kari.org](http://www.kari.org)

### Where does the Maize, Dairy, Soil Fertility & Nutribusiness program work?

The program works in priority Feed the Future areas of Eastern, Central, and Western Kenya.

### What does the Maize, Dairy, Soil Fertility & Nutribusiness program do?

The program is enhancing agricultural productivity through crop variety development, deployment, and testing; soil fertility management; and transfer of agronomic technology to farmers. Some of the specific areas targeted by the program include integrated management of aflatoxin; genetic finger printing of developed crop varieties; development of a seed system for African traditional crops; and field testing of biotechnology products. In the livestock sector, a major focus of the program's work is to promote and develop in vitro fertilization and embryo transfer technologies, and to distribute diagnostic and vaccination kits to detect and prevent a variety of animal diseases.

### How is the Maize, Dairy, Soil Fertility & Nutribusiness program making a difference?

Over twenty-two technologies developed by KARI have been made available for transfer to farmers and agribusinesses. To make sure the research and technology gets used, USAID's Feed the Future partners, such as the Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Program and the Kenya Maize Development Program organize field days, on-farm and on-station demonstrations.

Recent achievements include:

- Development and release of twelve new improved varieties of maize.
- Testing of 90 soil samples from various sites and discussing results with farmers in order to raise awareness on the need for better soil and water management.
- Twenty-one farmers, including six women, participated in the creation of a demonstration plot for a new cowpea variety. The activity included training on correct methods of spacing and fertilizer application.
- Training of 42 Animal Health Technicians on using the new East Coast Fever vaccine.

### **What key challenges does the Maize, Dairy, Soil Fertility & Nutribusiness program face?**

In spite of efforts made to support smallholder farmers with improved agricultural techniques and technology, adoption of these techniques remains low in some areas, particularly in the semi-arid regions of eastern Kenya. In order to address this critical challenge, KARI is conducting a research study to better understand what is preventing broader uptake of improved farming practices and technology in the semi-arid lands.

### **Maize, Dairy, Soil Fertility & Nutribusiness in action**

With support from USAID, the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute developed and packaged a rapid diagnostic test that allows farmers and livestock health practitioners to test goats for Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP) in the field. CCPP is extremely contagious, frequently fatal, and often eludes diagnosis. Rapid diagnosis is key to containment of the disease. Without knowledge of CCPP in years past, goat farmers in Mai Mahiu, Naivasha suffered severe losses in their herds. KARI has made the CCPP diagnostic test available to Mai Maihu farmers, enabling them to intervene appropriately and swiftly as soon as signs of the disease appear. With its promise of preventing livestock losses and promoting financial gain, the diagnostic test is nothing short of a miracle in Mai Mahiu.

### **For more information:**

[www.kari.org](http://www.kari.org)

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*Goats in Mai Maihu being tested for deadly caprine pneumonia*

**Updated August 2012**